



World Learning

DEMOCRACY FELLOWS PROGRAM

Awarded by USAID/Washington

Original Cooperative Agreement

No. DFD-A-00-05-00230-00

FINAL PROGRAM REPORT

SEPTEMBER 27, 2005 – SEPTEMBER 26, 2012

USAID Project Office: Office of Democracy & Governance, DCHA
Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance

DUNS No.: 07-396-1419

LOC No.: 712-00-131/HHS 69A7P

REQUEST No: 12504/0586

**WORLD LEARNING
DEMOCRACY FELLOWS PROGRAM**

Overall Goal: To develop a cadre of experienced technical experts committed to careers in democracy and governance.

Overall Purpose: To identify, place and supervise junior, mid-level and senior experts in assignments that support USAID's efforts to promote and strengthen the evolution of democratic practices and institutions in transitional or emerging democracies; and contribute to the career development and commitment of the fellows.

This report documents the Democracy Fellows Program's (DFP) program operations for the past seven years under NMS Cooperative Agreement No DFD-A-00-05-00230-00, effective September 27, 2005.

- At close-out, the Agreement Officer for the Democracy Fellows Program was:
 - Joseph W. Lentini (Office of Acquisition & Assistance (M/OAA/DCHA/DOFDA)).
- At close-out, the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) was:
 - Sheron E. Moore, Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DCHA/DRG/SP)

World Learning's principal program implementation staff over the life of the Democracy Fellows Program included:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| • ELLEN GARRETT | Program Director (2005-2009) |
| • KRISTEN CORCORAN | Program Administrator (2005-2006) |
| • HADIAN TO HENEVELD | Program Administrator (2007-2012) |
| • DORIN TUDORAN | Program Director (2009-2012) |

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2005 World Learning launched the new USAID Democracy Fellows Program (Cooperative Agreement DFD-A-00-05-00230-00), designed to develop a cadre of experienced technical experts committed to careers in democracy and governance, while contributing to DGCH/DG's provision of state-of-the art technical knowledge and skills in the areas of democracy and governance, other agencies of the US Government, international organizations, host governments and the general public. The program's stated purpose was two-fold:

- a) to identify, place and supervise junior, mid-level and senior experts in assignments that support USAID's efforts to promote and strengthen the evolution of democratic practices and institutions in transitional; and
- b) to contribute to the career development and commitment of the fellows.

Therefore, the program was intended, in part, to help meet the growing demand for qualified democracy specialists, as USAID and other international development agencies continued to expand and diversify their activities in the fields of democracy and governance. The program was also designed for Democracy Fellows to assist USAID and other international development agency projects and activities by providing technical expertise in democracy and governance.

- From September 2005 through September 2012, World Learning successfully implemented the Democracy Fellows Program, providing important field experience to some 29 professionals, simultaneously supporting the fellows' commitments to careers in international democracy and governance, and benefiting the USAID Missions and offices where the fellows served. During their fellowships, these World Learning Democracy Fellows developed and strengthened their expertise in international democracy and governance, and provided crucial assistance and expertise both to USAID democracy and governance teams, and to local democracy organizations and institutions.
- The Democracy Fellows traveled on TDY (Temporary Duty Assignment) to fifty-six (56) countries: Dominican Republic; Russia; Ukraine; Mexico; United Kingdom; Timor Leste, El Salvador; Azerbaijan; Montenegro; Peru; Ireland; Indonesia; Nigeria; Liberia; Costa Rica; Guatemala; Haiti; Panama; Trinidad & Tobago; Colombia; The Netherlands; Austria; Paraguay; Jamaica; France; Morocco; Bolivia; Mozambique; Kyrgyzstan; Rwanda; Honduras; Sudan; Kenya; West Bank Palestine; Ghana; Angola; Ethiopia; Tanzania; Guinea; Bangladesh; Ecuador; Cambodia, Italy; Bosnia; Canada;

Afghanistan; Armenia, Egypt; South Africa; Germany; Jordan; Hungary; Uganda; Denmark; Fiji; Libya;

Democracy Fellows recruited by World Learning not only demonstrated their value to the USAID units where they were assigned, but also developed professional reputations as highly capable technical experts in the burgeoning field of international democracy and governance. Indeed, during the seven-year life of the program, USAID sponsoring units offered twenty-four (24) fellowship extensions to World Learning's Democracy Fellows. This is an enviable extension rate that reflects substantial satisfaction with the program both by sponsoring units and by the individual Fellows. Many Democracy Fellows received multiple fellowship extensions, with some serving in USAID for as many as four years. In addition, when Democracy Fellows finally completed their service, nearly every former fellow found many opportunities for full-time employment in international democracy and governance and related career fields.

World Learning assigned four (4) democracy fellows overseas in USAID Missions. The remaining Democracy Fellows served with USAID/Washington regional and functional bureaus and offices, and with other U.S. government agencies, such as the international programs and liaison unit of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. A roster of all World Learning Democracy Fellows and their assignments and years of service is attached to this report (Attachment A).

World Learning ensured that each Washington-based Democracy Fellowship also included meaningful opportunities for the fellow to gain substantial practical field experience in democracy, rule of law, human rights, monitoring and evaluation, civil society, new media and related work in emerging democracies. Indeed, the overseas work accomplished by Washington-based Democracy Fellows has been of considerable importance to USAID Missions, and to the accomplishment of field support functions of USAID's democracy and governance units in Washington.

Ten (10) individuals who served as World Learning Democracy Fellows later joined the U.S. government through many routes, working with USAID offices such as the Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau (DCHA) and its Office of Democracy and Governance; Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance. Two (2) former Democracy Fellows have served as PSC or direct hire Democracy and Governance staff members in USAID Missions following their fellowships.

One (1) Democracy Fellow has been employed in the Department of Justice. Another returned to her position at the Congressional Research Service. Outside government, Democracy Fellows have found post-fellowship positions in a broad range of Private

Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), NGOs, international development companies, law firms, international contractors, and international development organizations.

Eight (8) Democracy Fellows returned to the academic world or their previous positions after their fellowships to resume their teaching, research and writing careers with the benefit of invaluable field experience that they gained from their Democracy Fellowships.

These many program accomplishments were facilitated by World Learning's equally successful implementation and management of the Democracy Fellows Program. World Learning was responsible for the myriad policy, program, administrative, managerial, financial, logistics and personnel functions necessary to implement this global program. These functions included:

- Developing program materials and advertising for applications;
- Recruiting a diversity of applicants;
- Reviewing and qualifying applications;
- Developing and maintaining applicant databases, accessible through multiple search variables;
- Screening, interviewing and selecting candidates;
- Nominating finalist candidates to USAID;
- Selecting individual finalists;
- Identifying and negotiating suitable fellowship assignments;
- Coordinating, and assisting USAID in drafting initial Fellowship Terms of Reference;
- Matching candidates and fellowship opportunities;
- Reviewing and negotiating fellows proposed workplans;
- Facilitating Secret-level National Security Clearances for Democracy Fellows;
- Orienting, testing and training new fellows;
- Monitoring and providing on-going oversight of fellows;
- Disseminating and sharing fellows' work and fellowship reports;
- Soliciting and coordinating mentors for Democracy Fellows;
- Providing financial and administrative support and supervision for fellowships;
- Negotiating and paying monthly fellowship stipends, benefits and allowances;
- Managing global safety, security and morale issues for fellows;
- Coordinating fellows' program and professional travel in accordance with USAID and World Learning policies and regulations;
- Arranging various global insurance coverages for fellows;
- Purchasing appropriate fellowship equipment;
- Managing fellowship support funds, payrolls, procurement and individual reimbursements and budgets;
- Providing administrative, travel and logistic support for fellows;
- Making travel, insurance and other direct vendor payments

- Conducting annual Democracy Fellows Program Conferences for fellows and mentors;
- Counseling and advising Democracy Fellows on their independent professional work products;
- Conducting periodic internal program evaluations and USAID information needs;
- Establishing and maintaining electronic and other communications with all fellows and sponsoring units;
- Fulfilling USAID and World Learning periodic reporting requirements; and

In accomplishing these functions over the years, World Learning consistently managed USAID program funds carefully and economically. Over the life of the program, and at each fiscal and programmatic interval, World Learning attained the program's results under budget, and ahead of schedule.

As the program evolved, the nature, experience and seniority of individual Democracy Fellowships also increased. During the program's early years, for instance, the majority of Democracy Fellows were junior or mid-level fellows. Their fellowships were generally limited to two years in duration, in order to expand the number of qualified individuals who could serve as Democracy Fellows. By the time the program concluded, the last group of fellows was comprised primarily of senior (2) and mid-level (4) fellows.

Throughout the life of the program, World Learning staff fielded and supported every Democracy Fellowship, domestic and international, including both new fellows and extensions. The Democracy Fellows Program managed the transition when fellows ended their service, negotiated and administered fellowship extensions, and processed normal fellowship terminations and new starts. World Learning's program staff also modified the overall candidate recruitment, nomination and selection processes to meet varying candidate supply and demand factors, as well as to address the regulatory and programmatic expectations of USAID and individual sponsoring units. These efforts included developing and improving materials and procedures to implement the program's solicitation, advertising, recruitment, application, nomination, selection, and fellowship oversight functions.

In administering the program and providing oversight of each fellowship, World Learning provided a range of services from initial recruitment, through the transition to alumni fellow status. World Learning recruited applicants widely, and continually (rolling application process for general interest and open program solicitations), as well as individually for specific fellowships requiring particular skill sets, foreign language capabilities, or specific professional or geographic expertise. Once fellowship finalists were nominated and selected, the Democracy Fellows Program staff routinely and efficiently addressed a wide range of logistic, financial, administrative, visa, transportation, medical, and communications issues in all regions of the world. World Learning's Democracy Fellows Program staff handled these matters skillfully and effectively, while also managing a number of particularly sensitive program or personnel issues.

World Learning communicated and coordinated with potential and eventual applicants, candidates, fellows, sponsoring Missions, mentors, and the four (4) individuals designated as USAID Cognizant Technical Officers. This on-going collaboration and coordination facilitated understanding of what the Democracy Fellows Program was (and was not), as well as consensus on appropriate individual fellowship program descriptions and work plans. This highly collaborative approach helped to identify and resolve potential misunderstandings before they became more serious conflicts or problems.

The Democracy Fellows Program maintained effective electronic, voice and mail communications for its Democracy Fellows, and managed global financial arrangements in support of all fellows, including fellowship travel, stipends, benefits and allowances. Through its corporate Sponsored Program Services Office, World Learning also provided USAID's financial management offices with regular quarterly financial reporting in accordance with World Learning's Cooperative Agreement with USAID. Throughout the duration of the Democracy Fellows Program, World Learning provided USAID with financial and accounting data information and services on demand, along with travel advances, vouchers, budget data and expense reports for all fellows, whether in Washington, D.C. or overseas.

After seven years, World Learning now closes its implementation of the USAID Democracy Fellows Program with an abiding sense of accomplishment – by the fellows and by the Democracy Fellows Program as a whole. The accomplishments of the program, and the individual and collective achievements of the Democracy Fellows, reinforce the extraordinary importance of the fellows' work, and highlight the Democracy Fellows Program's value as an investment in USAID's mission to promote democracy around the globe. Indeed, the stark realities that today link national security with USAID's mission to advance democracy globally, also serve to demonstrate the salience of the Democracy Fellows' efforts to promote a more democratic world.

World Learning's role in identifying and supporting a cadre of democracy experts engaged in the pragmatic work necessary to reach such a lofty goal remains as clear and essential today as it was in 2005. During the past seven years the World Learning Democracy Fellows Program has proved to be a significant asset for USAID. The program provided a sound foundation for many future democracy projects and other fellowship programs, and clearly accomplished the program's intended goal of building a highly regarded cadre of field-experienced technical experts committed to careers in democracy and governance.

II. PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. Program Goal:

“To develop a cadre of experienced technical experts committed to careers in democracy and governance, while contributing to DCH/DG's

provision of state-of-the-art technical knowledge and skills in the areas of democracy and governance to USAID, other agencies of the US Government, international organizations, host governments and the general public

In achieving the fundamental goal of the Democracy Fellows Program, World Learning awarded thirty-one (31) fellowships to candidates from an extremely broad range of personal and professional backgrounds. Three (3) fellows served in multiple Democracy Fellowships. Throughout the program, World Learning was particularly committed to assuring that its recruitment and nomination efforts yielded not only a sufficient quantity of qualified applicants to meet USAID's program goals, but also included candidates who represented the full diversity of America, as well as "the best and the brightest" that America has to offer.

The Democracy Fellows Program website was an invaluable resource for applicants and Democracy Fellows alike (see below for Democracy Fellows' discussion boards, etc.). For 2009 – 2012, the website averaged over 40,225 visits per year with over seven hundred (709) prospective applicants submitting fellowship application materials.

Almost half of the applicants nominated for fellowships were minority candidates, and a substantial majority of candidates that World Learning nominated for Democracy Fellowships were women.

Total percentage of women or minority applicants nominated per annual cycle (Jan-Dec):

- 2005 - 100%
- 2006 – 57%
- 2007 – 80%
- 2008 – 33%
- 2009 – 50%
- 2010 – 66%
- 2011 – 40%
- 2012 – 50%

The number of fellowships awarded each year varied, depending upon funds availability and demand from sponsoring USAID units, and the number of Democracy Fellows who continued their service through extensions of their existing fellowships. Over the life of the program, the number of fellows serving each year ranged from a low of one (1), at the start-up at the end of 2005 to a high 7 (seven) during the FY-2006. In total, World Learning Democracy Fellows provided USAID with the equivalent of more than 145 years of democracy and governance expertise under the program.

Democracy Fellows served USAID in many key areas, adding significantly to the technical agenda and intellectual leadership necessary for USAID to provide effective democracy and governance programming. Democracy fellows assisted USAID, both in Washington and in the field, in advancing cross-cutting approaches towards democracy's role in solving major societal and developmental problems. Their technical assistance on many of USAID's leading democracy and governance initiatives was also marked by a number of innovative and cross-sectoral approaches. Democracy Fellows contributed to USAID's reputation and success in its democracy and governance responsibilities, while at the same time building valuable career experience across the entire span of democracy and governance topics. These efforts have been especially important in the fragile and failing/failed states that comprise so much of USAID's democracy and governance portfolio.

The wide array of activities carried out by Democracy Fellows has reflected the versatility of World Learning's Democracy Fellows Program, and the extraordinarily complex and challenging democracy development issues facing USAID and the world. Of profound importance over the years has been the consolidation of expertise that Democracy Fellows have provided to USAID Missions and Bureaus. For example, the USAID Office of Democracy and Governance has placed a high priority on providing relevant, state-of-the-art training courses for its democracy officers in the field. Many Democracy Fellows over the year have designed, led or co-facilitated sessions of technical relevance to USAID Democracy and Governance Program Officers, Mission Directors, New Entry Professionals, overseas democracy officers, and interested US PVO and NGO personnel. In all cases, the Democracy Fellows' participation in democracy training sessions was well-received by USAID and other participants.

B. Program Funding

The total estimated amount of this Award for the initial period (September 27, 2005 – September 27, 2010) was \$15,041,135. The program was extended twice on an annual basis with the new effective ending date as September 26, 2012. The total obligated amount for the entire life of the program (September 27, 2005 – September 26, 2012) was \$8,957,002.

C. National Security Clearances

World Learning assumed responsibility for processing and obtaining security clearances, or conversions of existing security clearances for Democracy Fellows. Each fellow serving with USAID was required to obtain a "Secret" security clearance, or an appropriate temporary waiver, before World Learning could award that fellowship. Democracy Fellows Program staff coordinated closely with the relevant federal security clearance offices that handled background investigations and clearances, as well as with their security counterparts within USAID. Once Democracy Fellows completed their fellowships, they were removed from World Learning's list of active clearances.

The length of time that it took to obtain security clearances for a new Democracy Fellow was quite difficult to predict, and at times had an adverse impact on the placement of fellows. However, no nominated candidates found that they could not financially afford to wait for a clearance or a waiver. World Learning's coordination with the Defense Security Service was generally effective, and as a rule helped to avoid most such problems.

D. Nomination and Selection of Candidates

World Learning's program staff worked closely with sponsoring USAID units and Missions, as well as with the CTO, to identify suitable candidates for each new Democracy Fellowship, whether located in Washington, D.C. or overseas. Depending on applicant response and availability, World Learning typically nominated at least three – and often five or more – qualified candidates for each prospective fellowship. Efficient, consistent, and open communication among all concerned generally allowed the Democracy Fellows Program to find the appropriate fit of candidate to fellowship which met the sponsoring unit's personnel program needs.

In most instances, USAID units approached the Democracy Fellows Program with fairly well-defined scopes of work that fit within program requirements. There were instances where an applicant turned down the fellowship and we had to continue the recruitment or go with a back-up candidate. In several instances, of course, the sponsoring USAID unit had already identified the particular individual whose qualifications most closely matched its program needs. In these cases, to ensure the best possible fit, World Learning agreed to nominate such individuals as requested by USAID, provided that the individual in fact applied to the program. To assure the credibility and transparency of the fellowship program, World Learning believes that the best practice is to ensure that the pre-selection of individuals by the sponsoring unit should truly be an exception.

E. Democracy Fellowship Terms of Reference and Fellows' Workplans

As each new Democracy Fellowship was initiated, World Learning staff assisted USAID in drafting the initial Terms of Reference for the particular fellowship, and coordinated the programmatic approvals, funding and other administrative and management issues required to launch any new fellowship. In preparing new Democracy Fellows for their assignments, World Learning focused on both the substantive and the logistical/financial aspects of each fellowship. Democracy Fellows Program staff helped new fellows to develop their fellowship workplans, and to identify and articulate their proposed professional work products. The requirement for fellows to complete a fellowship work product was intended to encourage each Democracy Fellow to make a meaningful contribution to the field of democracy and governance. These work products could include substantive reports, analyses, research, curricula, articles, book chapters or similar publications or products that would represent a

tangible outcome of each fellowship. The Democracy Fellow's workplan served as the foundation and guide for each fellow's assignment and contribution to the sponsoring USAID unit. The wide scope of Democracy Fellows' activities also demonstrated the complexity of the fellows' work and the relevance of democracy and development to larger questions of societal roles and responsibilities.

World Learning's efforts were structured to ensure that before commencing the fellowship, each Democracy Fellow had a written workplan that set out the main objectives, planned results, expected approaches and outcomes, and the reporting and other requirements that would guide the fellowship. World Learning assisted fellows and sponsoring units in developing and negotiating these workplans, and in reaching mutual agreement within the terms of the Democracy Fellows Program and USAID policy.

In World Learning's experience, the development and negotiation of a written fellowship workplan before the fellowship was awarded was the single most important objective measure of how successful a particular Democracy Fellowship was likely to be. While most Democracy Fellowships were quite successful, the fellowships that resulted in the greatest satisfaction for the fellows, and for the sponsoring USAID units, were those that were launched from a solid foundation of well-defined expectations, agreed to in a written workplan. Of course, the fellowship workplans were not set in stone, and World Learning expected and required that they be reviewed and revised as necessary, and at least quarterly.

F. Orientation of New Democracy Fellows

World Learning conducted Orientation Programs for all new fellows, facilitating their transitions into their fellowships, and into their placements in various USAID Missions and Bureaus. To orient new fellows World Learning developed, and then regularly reviewed, revised and expanded, a comprehensive *Democracy Fellows Program Handbook*. That volume contained not only relevant World Learning and USAID policies and procedures, but additional democracy and governance resources and reference materials, along with administrative forms, examples, instructions, and so forth. The Democracy Fellows Program also arranged highly regarded seminars on the taxation of fellowships and of fellows serving abroad.

G. Communication between USAID, World Learning and Democracy Fellows

World Learning has made constant efforts to answer, promptly, each and every correspondence received from USAID. However, the agency hasn't reciprocated. Too many times we had to wait days, weeks even months to hear back from USAID. Sometimes, we have never received an answer even to some very punctual questions.

Unfortunately, some Fellows' Final Reports signal the same issue: the will of the Agency to properly, clearly and constantly communicate with the Democracy Fellows was, too many times, absent. Some Fellows felt misinformed by their Mentors when discussing the objectives included in the Fellows Job Descriptions.

H. Annual Democracy Fellows Conferences and Career Development

To help advance the Democracy Fellows Program community and strengthen the commitment of Democracy Fellows to careers in international democracy and governance, World Learning hosted 2-day Annual Meetings for our Fellows. Beginning after 2008, an Alumni Breakfast was also added to the agenda of the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meetings and Alumni Breakfasts welcomed fellows and alumni input, and invited external democracy and government practitioners from academia, think tanks, institutes, US PVOs, and the US government. These programs typically offered fellows a dynamic range of discussion topics, such as fellow-to-fellow and alumni connections, Democracy Fellows Program communications, life as a fellow at USAID, life beyond the fellowship, and issues related to navigating the bureaucracies of World Learning and USAID. World Learning attempted to maintain a balance between programmatic presentations and fellowship-related issues.

Over the life of the project, World Learning organized six (6) Annual Meetings, 13 (thirteen) Brownbag Events, and 3 (three) Alumni Breakfasts events.

The Democracy Fellows Program also offered fellows in-service seminars and professional career development opportunities to advance their careers in international democracy and governance, and provided modest funding for professional development. Fellows used these funds to subscribe to journals in their fields of endeavor, to attend professional conferences and workshops, and to further develop their careers.

I. Democracy Fellows' Compensation

To avoid perceptions of favoritism or personal bias, World Learning developed a standard and comprehensive process for establishing the initial salary and compensation levels of new Junior- Mid- and Senior-level Democracy Fellows. This process was generally tied to the *General Schedule (Not Including Locality Rates for overseas Fellows and the Washington DC Locality Schedule for Washington DC based Fellows* issued by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, for federal employees, and used objective criteria (e.g., educational degrees, years of directly related experience, salary history etc.) to establish each individual's fellowship level and initial salary.

Within each of the three fellowship levels (Junior, Mid and Senior), an individual's salary was determined by reference to prior earnings (USAID Form 1420), if any. If a new fellow had no comparable or appropriate prior earnings history, that individual received the base salary for

the particular fellowship level. This pay schedule had both salary floors and ceilings, tied to the GS Schedule. World Learning believes that creating this type of formal and transparent system for determining Democracy Fellows' pay was an important element in avoiding any appearance or perception of favoritism and bias with regard to fellows. Pursuant to USAID guidance, Fellows received a 5% increase if they extended their fellowships into a second, third or fourth fellowship year, subject to a fixed ceiling for any Democracy Fellowship stipend.

On one occasion it appeared that an USAID official had negotiated salary with an individual candidate, offering compensation that was outside the parameters authorized by World Learning and the Democracy Fellows Program. This situation was addressed with World Learning staff and the USAID CTO. We advised the USAID official that such matters were exclusively within the purview of World Learning as the implementing organization. World Learning recommends that USAID training for program officers might include a component that explains how the agency's various fellows may differ from personal service contractors or other personnel assigned to USAID.

J. Post-Fellowship Career Opportunities

As the Democracy Fellows Program progressed and grew into a valued institution, USAID and other U.S. Government agencies found that former Democracy Fellows offered a wealth of experience and expertise to support U.S. foreign assistance and foreign policy efforts. The numbers of former World Learning Democracy Fellows who have worked – and who continue to serve – in government positions attest to this singular success.

- USAID
- U.S. Department of Justice
- Congressional Research Service

Outside government service, Democracy Fellows have found post-fellowship employment in a broad range of Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), NGOs, international development companies, law firms, international contractors, and international development organizations, including:

- Private Law Practice
- International Finance Corporation
- MIT International Development Network
- The World Bank
- Independent Consultancies
- The Asia Foundation

- IZA, Bonn GER
- World Learning

Former World Learning Democracy Fellows have also found or returned to employment at universities such as:

- University of Pennsylvania
- UC Hastings College of Law
- Georgetown University Law Center Institute for International Law
- Georgetown University

K. Program Evaluation

World Learning's financial systems and records have been audited annually over the seven years that the Democracy Fellows Program has operated. No significant audit issues were ever reported. USAID has not conducted an external program evaluation of the Democracy Fellows Program, but World Learning regularly performed its own assessments and evaluations. Each Democracy Fellow was asked to submit reviews of the Democracy Fellows Program and its various components, along with periodic (e.g., Quarterly) performance reports on fellowship activities, summarizing successes and challenges, as well as career development issues and concerns. These reports served as analytical barometers of fellowship success. In addition, World Learning asked sponsoring USAID units and missions to review the fellow's reports for their own information and program management and planning, and to help guide the fellow's future performance. World Learning also used these reports to assess the particular Democracy Fellow's career development and accomplishments. Fellows were required to obtain USAID concurrence on any substantive proposed revisions to work or travel plans. In addition, World Learning maintained continual communication and collaboration with the program CTO, to ensure that the Democracy Fellows Program consistently met USAID's needs and expectations.

World Learning, of course, used other formal and informal methods to monitor and assess each Democracy Fellowship, and the overall Democracy Fellows Program. Feedback from both Democracy Fellows and sponsoring units was positive. World Learning believes that this record of satisfaction reflects its steady efforts to be responsive to the needs of the Democracy Fellows and their USAID sponsors. The program's assigned CTO and other USAID staff regularly provided advice and guidance on a variety of programmatic issues over the course of the program, making World Learning's overall implementation more responsive and successful.

III. LESSONS LEARNED

World Learning is pleased to note that the new Democracy Grant and Fellowships Program (DGF) contains several changes that are consistent with the feedback provided over the years by Fellows and by World Learning. Unfortunately, the DFP did not get a chance to use better leverages in recruiting candidates or ways to make their work at and for USAID as productive as they could have been.

A. Length of Program

Program fellowships have been one year with an option to extend. However one year is often not adequate to fully accomplish the goals which USAID and the Fellow develop. An initial two-year term with an option to extend up to an additional two years will prove a much better mechanism. This new approach not only offers the opportunity to develop comprehensive program descriptions for each Fellow but also increases the probability that the goals of each program description will be accomplished alongside achievable results.

B. Flexible Fellowship Options

All fellowships have been full-time and a minimum of one year. This precluded USAID from accessing talented individuals not in a position to leave their current employment. Under the new mechanism full-time and part-time fellowships will be for an initial two-year term with an option to extend up to an additional two years. These models better match the demands of USAID/W and Missions. Part-time and short-term Fellows could have been recruited from a much broader pool of talent which would have included highly regarded academics and researchers who may not be able to commit themselves to a full-time, two-year term.

C. Improved Benefits Package

Fellows had limited health and retirement benefits which have deterred promising candidates from applying. The new will aligned Fellows benefits package with that of other USAID fellowship programs, including medical insurance, retirement, life insurance, long-term disability, unemployment, workers compensation, short-term disability, and vision and dental insurance.

D. Recruiting

World Learning has recruited candidates through our website, advertisements, conference participation, and occasional ad hoc outreach to specific universities. Recruiting is particularly difficult when there are few or no active, open fellowships. USAID has been reluctant to open enough positions and the agency's approach towards recruitment has lacked coherence. USAID's divisions have not been uniformly fully engaged and consistent in their strategy to bring Democracy fellows on board. Consequently, recruitment of fellows

has at times been slow. The new mechanism will see a substantial increased number of fellowships. This could alleviate the predicament of recruiting without any vision or strategy.

E. Orientation

While the orientation provided by the World Learning was highly appreciated by the Fellows, final reports indicate fellows' disappointment with the orientation received at USAID. Based on feedback from former Fellows we have encouraged USAID to devote more time to orientation for participants in all of the Agency's fellowships. Unfortunately, final reports of several Fellows indicate that the issue of orientation at USAID was never taken care of in proper manner. Here is a comment:

"Even after several months here, there are many functions of the office that I do not know. I propose that new fellows sit in at least one team meetings for all the divisions, so that they can become familiar with the other divisions and their functions."

F. Mentoring

Based on feedback from former Fellows we have encouraged USAID to devote more time to mentoring the Fellows, too. Unfortunately, final reports of several Fellows indicate that the mentoring at USAID continued to be an issue. Here is a comment:

"Many times I felt under-employed, and did not have much guidance on how to proceed. These issues worked themselves out as time progressed, and I initiated some initiatives, i.e., TDY reports/presentations, and concept papers. I also joined some committees & taskforces, to help generate more work for myself. During the first few months, I felt there was no guidance to utilize my skills and time, and I did not know enough to create work for myself."

G. Professional Development

Although an important part of each and every contract, Fellows' professional development continued to be the most neglected component by USAID staff. Numerous fellows complained in their final reports about not having enough time to devote to professional development. Here are some comments:

"I had anticipated that this fellowship would provide me with several growth opportunities that never materialized. These included opportunities to travel to the missions and assist them with assessments, funding requests, etc. I also expected to be permitted to attend educational forums and conferences to learn more about the challenges, needs and assets of countries for which I served as a backstop. Finally,

cooperate with other DG colleagues on innovative cross-sectoral programs to promote the holistic resolution of problems that may plague a developing country. Unfortunately, despite my efforts to participate in these types of opportunities, due to the myriad of challenges and lack of clear focus of this fellowship –as detailed in my previous reports - this fellowship did not permit me to accomplish any of these goals.”

“Perhaps this indicates that the Democracy Fellows Program has room to include a greater focus on professional development for fellows in the program“

“A review of this and other reports readily reveals that it is not tailored to meet the growth opportunities and career broadening expectations worthy of a mid-grade development professional.“

“The fellow found it difficult to work on his academic projects or utilize his fellowship findings for his research. DCHA/DG should create institutional conditions that would allow Democracy Fellows to advance their research agenda as part of fellowship duties instead of outside work time. In addition, DCHA/DG should make it possible for fellows to utilize their findings and data for research and publication. The inability to do so makes it very difficult to effectively market the skills and knowledge gained during the fellowship in the academic job market. Second, fellows should have the resources to maintain and develop professional contacts and participate in academic conference and training events that are relevant to their professional careers.“

“The fellowship provided a small amount of time and some assistance in the creation of an article on field experiments in democracy and governance that will be published in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Although the official fellowship terms promote publications, most of the work for this article was conducted outside of work time at USAID. Furthermore, due to lack of time, the fellow was not able to take advantage of two other opportunities to produce publishable articles that would also have been of direct use and interest to DCHA/DG. The fellow found it extremely difficult to create time during work hours to conduct research and writing for publications. In addition, the fellow found it very challenging to maintain activities necessary to maintain good standing in the academic community while conducting the fellowship. She spent a majority of evenings, weekends, and vacation time revising articles for publication that had been submitted prior to the fellowship but accepted during the fellowship, maintaining an ongoing research project in Uganda, reading and advising 5 graduate students on dissertations, attending academic conferences and reviewing articles and grant applications when requested to do so as part of the academic peer review process. The fellow suggests that if mid-career academics are recruited as Democracy Fellows, explicit provisions are made by USAID and the fellow to accommodate continuing academic responsibilities as part of the fellowship tasks.“

“Two objectives from my Democracy Fellowship with USAID/DRG/LT were not realized. First, there was not an opportunity to teach workshops/clinics to the DRG staff regarding program evaluation. This objective has not fulfilled because it did not represent a priority for the Learning team during the fellowship period. Also, despite a desire and need to build in-house capacity, the achievement of this goal will be dependent on establishing a set of incentives that encourages the staff to pursue professional development in this area, as well as a change in the normal operating procedure of contracting outside organizations and individuals to conduct trainings.

Second, regarding my objective to write a paper, there are currently no incentives in the DRG Center for the staff to dedicate a significant amount of time and effort on a research paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Furthermore, a majority of the DRG staff do not have the training necessary to conduct high-level research. Therefore, in order to complete this objective, I would have had to independently complete the majority of the research, data collection analysis, and writing; this creates a perverse incentive problem.”

H. Job descriptions

Some Fellows expressed their disappointment with the discrepancies between the job descriptions they and their USAID mentors agreed upon and the day by day reality of the fellowships. Although they were told that their job descriptions are not written in stone and could be recalibrated on a quarterly basis, several fellows complained about finding less than expected understanding from the USAID staff in respecting the initial terms of their agreement or renegotiating the terms of the job description as to align them with reality. Here are some comments:

“Overall, the project was a bit of a disappointment for me. I had come into the Fellowship with the understanding that I would be joining a team doing primary research on party assistance. In the event, little research was done during the year, and the primary products of the project were complete in draft form before I arrived. Consequently, most of my work on the project was related to editing and revision, rather than research and conceptualization. ”

“I was asked to retool the training materials on ROL, injecting academic rigor into the curriculum. I created a training which included all of the relevant ROL academic discourse. The trainings were viewed quite favorably by the FSO/FSNs receiving the training. However, the training staff at USAID felt there existed too much academic rigor, and not enough USAID programming centric material. Now, the training materials have been changed back to the materials used before my arrival at USAID. The goal of adding academic rigor to USAID’s ROL trainings was an unwelcome event

for USAID's ROL personnel, as they would have had to become familiar with the academic discourse in order to use my template for training."

"My final year at USAID was characterized by many learning experiences—some of them tougher than others. 2011 saw the final cancellation of the Mobile Khabar program that I designed and conceived in Afghanistan in 2009. This was a major blow to me, both professionally and personally. (When you overcome many obstacles to get a project funded and procured, it doesn't remain as a purely professional concern.)"

I. Networking and Education Meetings

World Learning has organized an annual two-day workshop at which current Fellows can network with each other and with former Fellows and learn about new topics of common interest. While this has been well received, invariably one or more Fellows were on fellowship related travel or were unable to attend for the full two-days. Two one-day sessions would have increased the likelihood that all Fellows could be able to attend at least one session and would have better accommodated their hectic schedules

The last Annual Meeting took place on August 23, 2012. Four (4) Fellows presented the projects they were working on. USAID staff (including mentors and managers) was invited but none attended the meeting. The 2012 Annual Meeting binder is shared in Attachment D.

J. Hallmarks of Successful Fellowships

Over the years, Democracy Fellows, USAID and World Learning staff regularly consulted to improve the Democracy Fellows Program, and to maximize the benefits that accrued to both USAID and the individual fellows. The following factors were generally considered to be the most important elements contributing to the success of the Democracy Fellows Program:

- Fellows' freedom, independence, and flexibility;
- Fellows' community and camaraderie – Networking and support for fellows and alumni;
- Practical fellowships – Fellows' knowledge and skills were valued and fellows could apply them to meaningful problems of democracy;
- Professional advancement and development for fellows;
- Responsiveness of World Learning staff;
- Combined practical and analytic work in a fellowship; and
- Opportunities for learning.

IV. SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAM MATERIALS

Copies of these Democracy Fellows Program materials may be found in a series of attachments to this Final Program Report:

- Attachment A: Roster of World Learning Democracy Program Fellows
- Attachment B: Chart of Democracy Fellows
- Attachment C: Democracy Fellows Final Reports
- Attachment D: Copies of The 2012 Annual Meeting binder including Agenda, Fellows' presentations and keynote speaker' presentation